



Hoisington Koegler Group Inc.
Creative Solutions for Land Planning and Design

Needs Assessment: Key Findings

Park Accessibility

- While the current number and acreage of parks is adequate, it will not meet the needs of the expected population in 10 to 20 years.
- Accessibility to a park (neighborhood, regional, community, etc) is good. There are pockets of low accessibility on outskirts of city with the largest area of concern in the east/southeast.
- As the City grows there is potential for less accessibility – particularly for community parks and specialized facilities (pools, gym space, tennis, etc.).
- Neighborhood and community parks are well-utilized, with the potential exception of by minority groups.
- Outreach to minority groups is needed to determine how best to serve their needs.
- Access to parks and amenities is lower in low-income neighborhoods.

Facility Mix

- Residents feel that City not meeting expectations given size of City
- While neighborhoods have pride in their local parks, with a few exceptions, neighborhood parks are lacking a unique identity and distinctive features that represent the neighborhood.
- Typical neighborhood park facilities (tennis, shelters, basketball, hockey rinks, athletic fields) have low usage and low satisfaction.
- Sports fields/complexes need upgrading and a long-term approach for future use and functionality.
- Some ADA accessibility, but additional needed.
- Major capital improvements are needed for specialized facilities, such as pools, tennis, golf clubhouse, etc.
- Playground distribution is good, but natural playscapes should be included in the mix
- Need for more shelters across the City.
- Facility mix should be updated to incorporate current needs, including additional dog parks, indoor facilities (gyms, playgrounds, pools), community gardens, lacrosse fields, pickleball, and those of underrepresented populations

Natural Areas

- Increasing interest in preserving and accessing natural areas.
- Currently access to natural areas is low without a vehicle.
- Missed opportunities for natural areas to serve as green corridors linking the park system.
- The nature center is highly utilized, and may not meet future demand.

- Connections needed to natural areas outside of city limits.
- Concern about quality, preservation, and management of existing natural areas.
- Expanding demand for nature based programming.

Programming

- City has good working relationships with recreation groups and associations, who do a good job of providing a variety of programs.
- There is confusion about who provides programming and what the City's role is in that regard.
- Program development and assessment could be more real time/in-tune with participant needs to fill gaps in programming provided by associations and groups.
- Partnerships do not seem at times to be mutually beneficial.
- Festivals/music are popular events.
- More integration with arts programming.
- Volunteer coordination has the potential to positive impact programming reach.
- Technology improvements (users desire wifi, amazon experience).
- Desire for unstructured, family-based, nature-based, and drop-in activities.
- More programming in low income areas and underutilized parks.

Mobility

- City trail/sidewalk system is a great asset to park system
- Fix trail gaps across the City for more complete connectivity
- Prioritize system hierarchy- 'safe routes to parks', year-round mobility, commuter bike facilities

System Condition

- Condition and cleanliness important to system image.
- Routine maintenance seems good (mowing, vegetation management).
- Significant concerns about deferred maintenance issues (parking lots, tennis center, skate park, pools, buildings, lighting, playgrounds).
- Care should be taken in system expansion due to existing system maintenance/replacement needs.
- Overall system condition does not meet community expectations - modernization of facilities and equipment desired.
- Lack of sustainable features like rain gardens and naturalized areas in parks.

Operations (management, maintenance, and funding)

- The system is well-managed but underfunded.
- Operating expenditures are not keeping up with system needs and comparable communities, making future funding particularly concerning.
- Strong desire for maintenance of existing infrastructure.
- Volunteer coordination is lacking.
- Potential for more public/private partnerships, taking care to avoid exclusion.

- Maintenance department has outgrown current facility.
- Need to coordinate with school district to identify overlaps and efficiencies in mission/services.
- Need to educate the public on the real costs and benefits of parks.